

Dear Senator Osten and Representative Walker, and Members of the Appropriations Committee:

My name is Karen Steinberg. I'm a clinical psychologist and associate professor and have worked in the department of psychiatry at UConn Health for over 20 years. I have been able to focus my efforts on research in psychotherapy, attachment and child social-emotional development; teaching of medical, graduate, and psychiatry residents; clinical practice addressing anxiety, depression, and developmental trauma; and building programs that foster the well-being of families with young children. I have been very fortunate to have spent much of my professional career at UConn Health, which has allowed me to develop prevention and early intervention programs through collaborations with state agencies such as Office of Early Childhood. Since 2007, I have directed a home visitation program, UConn Health Parenting, that brings support and services to at-risk families. We have served mothers, fathers, and young children, providing home visits, developmental guidance, and an array of psychoeducational and support groups and linkage to other community resources. This program is meant to offer primary and secondary prevention, build protective factors, and improve the negative physical and emotional health trajectories associated with exposure to early adversities.

In addition to UConn Health Parenting, I, along with a skilled and dedicated team, developed and oversee another early intervention program called Mind over Mood. Mind over Mood began as a clinical trial evaluating the efficacy of a home-based psychotherapeutic treatment for maternal depression. It has expanded to become a statewide initiative that seeks to address maternal mental health problems and prevent the deleterious consequences that may result if left untreated. We need only glance at recent headlines to observe the devastation associated with unaddressed postpartum depression and psychosis. Mind over Mood is engaged with providing evidence-informed treatment for PMADs (perinatal mood and anxiety disorders) and with enhancing the workforce of competent clinicians trained to care for this important and underserved population. In addition to operating a specialized clinical service we have trained close to 150 therapists throughout Connecticut since 2012 with whom we triage referrals from the network of home visitation programs.

UConn Health has been critical in the development of *all* of this work. I have had the fortune of working at an institution, and within a department, that has supported my professional growth, and has allowed me to pursue important goals in developing these programs treating underserved populations. I know that I might not have had these opportunities if I worked elsewhere. I am just one example of the many faculty and staff that UConn Health has supported over many years in providing excellent education; conducting seminal research; administering exceptional clinical care; and serving as a valuable safety net for our state.

Members of the Appropriations committee, I am writing today to ask that you give your support to fully funding the critical block grants for both UConn Health and UConn, and that you permanently remove the state's unfunded legacy costs from UConn Health's operating budget which will assist in making our research grants more competitive. Thank you very much for considering these comments.